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Pilot Recruiter Linked to CIA

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WASHINGTON — An American recruiting agent, suspected of working under CIA auspices, has enlisted 95 Cuban or other exile pilots in the U.S. during the last two years.

Ostensibly they were to fly for The Congo, according to his notarized statement with the Justice Department.

The mysterious New Yorker, Gerald N. Saunders, 46, gives a Bronx address in a filing with the foreign agents registration section.

\$215,000

He calls himself an industrial and personnel consultant and contends he paid out \$215,000 to recruit the pilots.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is aware of the case and plans to look into it.

Federal law bars recruitment on American soil for foreign military forces.

The Justice Department filings do not show whether Saunders is recruiting for military or civilian pilots.

The bulk of the \$215,000 went into \$800 advances to the pilots, two-way tickets to Leopoldville and a \$150-a-head recruiting fee that went to Saunders, according to the filing.

RECRUITMENT

Saunders' statements say he paid out \$75,000 on the "recruitment program" for 32 pilots in 1966, and \$140,000 in 1965 to recruit 63 pilots.

No official would say for the record that the Saunders enterprise was CIA-backed, but the New York Times reported last April that Cuban exile pilots in The Congo flew B-26 bombers on raids and the "sponsor, paymaster and director" of the operation was the CIA.

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